

VZCZCXRO3854
RR RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHNEH
DE RUEHCI #0307 3241100
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 201100Z NOV 09
FM AMCONSUL KOLKATA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2497
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2387
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 1012
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 1009
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0075
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3113

UNCLAS KOLKATA 000307

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/INSB (TITUS)

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PTER](#) [IN](#)
SUBJECT: MAOISTS TARGET AND DERAIL PASSENGER TRAIN BEFORE JHARKHAND
ELECTIONS

REF: KOLKATA 287

¶1. (SBU) On November 19 alleged Maoists (also known as Naxals) detonated an explosive device targeting the Tatanagar-Bilaspur passenger train between Manoharpur and Poseita in the Maoist-affected state of Jharkhand. The blast occurred at 9:45 pm approximately 120 km southwest of Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. According to an onsite railway official, one individual was killed and sixty were wounded when the blast derailed eight passenger coaches. The state's senior civil servant for law and order confirmed that no Amcits were injured in the incident.

¶2. (SBU) According to the local railways police, this is the first time in recent memory that Maoists have targeted a train, as opposed to a track segment, thereby jeopardizing, and not just delaying, passengers. Central police had been traveling in three of the eight derailed compartments, but had disembarked at Manoharpur before the train was attacked. A senior police official speculated that the Maoists may have had information about the central police and therefore targeted the passenger train.

¶3. (U) The train attack comes on the eve of the Maoist's November 20 general strike in Jharkhand and their boycott of the multiphase Jharkhand state elections scheduled to begin on November 25. The strike had been called to protest the rumored upcoming anti-Maoist police action set to begin in the near future in states affected by Maoist violence.

Comment

¶4. (SBU) While Maoists and other insurgent groups have detained trains and targeted train tracks in the past (Reftel), the targeting of the passenger train raises concerns about the ability of the railways to protect its trains and passengers in Maoist-affected areas. Furthermore, the attack forces Railways Minister and Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee, who has been accused of being soft on the Maoists, to take a firmer stand against the violent insurgent group.

PAYNE